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ABSTRACT

Containing a methodological and conceptual critique of rules theory, this paper argues that rules theory cannot adequately explain enigmatic episodes because of its reliance on the practical syllogism and the concept of coordination. It proposes structural analysis as an alternative approach to analyzing and conceiving of enigmatic episodes. The paper also presents a case study and develops revisions in both rules theory and structural analysis. (Author/FL)

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THE STRUCTURAL STUDY OF COMMUNICATION:

A CRITIQUE OF RULES THEORY

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THE STRUCTURAL STUDY OF COMMUNICATION:

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Abstract

A methodological and conceptual critique of rules theory was conducted. It was argued that rules theory cannot adequately explain enigmatic episodes because of its reliance on the practical syllogism and the concept of coordination. Structural analysis was proposed as an alternative approach to analyzing and conceiving of enigmatic episodes. A case study was presented and revisions in both rules theory and structural analysis were developed.

The rules approach has established itself as a genuine contender among the available alternatives for conceiving of and doing research in interpersonal communication (Pearce, 1976; Miller, 1978). In the short period of time from 1972 (Cushman and Whiting, 1972) through the present (Cronen and Pearce, 1978; Cronen, Pearce, and Snavely, 1979), a robust, complex and evocative literature has developed. This paper is a contribution to that developing line of inquiry. In it I want to pose three arguments: first, that there is a class of episodes that rules theory, as so far developed, cannot adequately explain; second, that that class of episodes occurs frequently in people's lives and is of central importance to them; and third, that structural analysis provides for a more adequate explanation of that class of episodes.

ENIGMATIC EPISODES

Let us take up the second of these arguments first, that there is a class of episodes, enigmatic episodes, that is both frequent and important in people's lives. We will proceed by (1) defining "episode," (2) defining "enigmatic episode," and (3) by relying on shared human experience as well as the testimony of a variety of scholars to attest to the frequency and importance of enigmatic episodes.

Harre and Secord (1972, pp.10-11) define "episode" as follows: "an episode is any sequence of happenings in which human beings engage which has some principle of unity. Episodes have a beginning and end that can usually be identified. . . .the unifying principle for a series of actions is the identification of them as the performance of a certain act." Pearce (1976, p.21) cites another definition by Harre and Secord (1972, p.153), a paraphrase of the one above, and goes on to indicate the definition is

a useful one "because it is purposefully imprecise, being determined by the actors rather than an observer; because it indicates that episodes may vary widely in scope (from 'having coffee with' to 'having an affair with'); and because it defines episodes interpersonally." Finally, Cronen, Pearce, and Snavely (1979, p.3), in a paper presented at this convention, define episodes as "recurrent patterns of behavior, the specific content of which may vary but must remain within a given configuration, perceived by the participants and/or observers as a bounded whole." Allowing for their being "purposefully imprecise," rules theorists seem to have established a common meaning for "episode."

We may conclude the same for "enigmatic episodes." To Harre and Secord (1972, p.12) they are episodes "having neither an explicit set of rules, nor produced by well-founded causal mechanisms." To Pearce (1976, p. 24) "an eipsode is enigmatic if its expression in the form of rules in inadequate as a guide for action." To the interlocutors, an episode would be enigmatic if they did not share a "standardized usage" (Cappella, 1972, p. 237), "a set of appropriate, conventional, and normative symbol-referent associations and symbol combinations " (see Pearce, 1976 on $Episodes_2$); if they did not have socially constructed and sanctioned meanings (see Pearce, 1976 on $Episodes_1$); or if they held incongruent interpretations of an encounter (see Pearce, 1976 on $Episodes_3$). In each case above, a given individual's rules do not provide an adequate guide for action.

Such cases are neither uncommon nor unimportant in our culture. Harre and Secord (1972, p.171) contend "that most of the episodes of social life are. . .enigmatic." We may respond to their contention in one of two ways. First, we may disagree if we define "episode" narrowly, as for example a conversation. Most of the time I and my conversational partners do share standardized usages, and our interchanges proceed quite smoothly.

However, we can reasonably expect the proportion of enigmatic conversations to increase. Our culture is experiencing fundamental changes in values (Novak, 1970; Lifton, 1976; Slater, 1974); and members of the culture are experiencing changes inherent to moving through the life cycle (Sheehy, 1974; Adams, Hapers and Hopson, 1976). A cumulative effect of these changes will be to increase the proportion of my interchanges with people who do not share my standardized usages.

A second view of Harre and Secord's contention that most eipsodes are enigmatic is to believe it, if we define "episode" broadly, as a sequence of sub-episodes spanning months or even years. "Being married" or "teaching" are examples. From this perspective Harre and Secord are alleging that most people are incapable of placing a single episode, narrowly defined, into an episode, broadly defined, and adequately understanding it based on its position in the sequence. Contemporary social criticism also supports this view. One of the commonly cited symptoms of our fundamental cultural change is the loss of, or loss of confidence in, our symbol systems available for understanding existence (Lifton, 1976; Novak, 1970; Slater, 1974). So whether we conceive of episodes narrowly or broadly, either the incidence of enigmatic episodes is on the increase or they already do comprise most of our daily interchange.

The final point I want to make in this section is that enigmatic episodes are of crucial importance in the lives of human beings. It is therefore not only important to theory development to adequately account for all types of episodes, it is also important to our discipline that we produce knowledge that society at large needs, wants badly, and will pay for.

In the field of social criticism Lifton (1976) has outlined five methods humans typically use to try to achieve a sense of immortality and continuity, basic, he argues, to the integrity of the self. The first method

is through the biological mode, in which continuity is achieved through one's progeny. The second is the spiritual mode, as a belief in life after death or as a belief in the possibility of transcendence to higher planes of existence. Third, one may achieve a sense of continuity or immortality through one's works or achievements. Fourth, one may see oneself as a part of nature, which is as eternal. Finally, one may experience "experiential transcendence," that state of "extraordinary psychic unity and perceptual intensity" (p.34) engendered by such activities as childbirth, dance, battle, sexual love, or intellectual creation.

Lifton (1976) argues that these five modes of achieving symbolic immortality are also our means of coping with the uprootedness of modern society, "the pervasive sense of 'living deadness' emanating from holocaust, undigested change, large bureaucracy, and. . .the image of the machine." (p. 138). They are means of transforming personal reality, the better to cope with it. After examining each mode of what he calls "communal resymbolization," Lifton makes the generalization that "genuine transformation requires that we 'experience' our annihilation in order to prevent it. . . [that] every significant step in human existence involves some inner sense of death" (p. 149).

Let us return to the language of rules theory. Lifton's analysis of contemporary culture sets out the conditions for enigmatic episodes. Episodes are enigmatic when actors' rules are inadequate guides for action, when actors do not share standardized usages. It is under these conditions, Lifton argues, that the culture turns its efforts to creating new symbol systems: "They seek new forms of connection, movement, and integrity around which to build new communities for living and working" (Lifton, 1976, P. 138). Enigmatic episodes then one of crucial importance to human beings. Repeated encounters with them both explains the malaise of modern society and sparks efforts to create new shared symbol systems.

Other writers in other contexts, using different languages, have also cited the centrality of enigmatic episodes in life experience: Sheehy (1974) and Adams, Hayes and Hopson (1976) regarding the adult life cycle; Perry (1970) regarding intellectual development in the college years; and Orr (1978) and Conville (1977;1978) regarding the development of communicative competencies in college students. It seems clear that, at both a cultural level and a personal level, our ability to cope with enigmatic episodes is crucial. It is encumbant upon the discipline to produce knowledge for understanding enigmatic episodes and to develop training programs to enhance coping abilities.

RULES AND INTENTIONS

Let us return now to the first argument to be developed in this essay, that contemporary rules theory does not adequately explain enigmatic episodes. The argument centers on an analytical technique widely used in the literature, the practical syllogism. The problem is that the practical syllogism entails a kind of intentionality that is not present in the enigmatic episode. Two forms of the practical syllogism have appeared in the literature. First, following Von Wright (1971), Pearce (1976) used the form:

A wishes B to occur;

A knows/believes that he must do X if B is to occur;

Therefore, A does X.

where: A is a person,

B is an episode, and

X is a particular behavior given meaning by its location in the episode.

Second, Cronen and Pearce (1978, P. 17) have used a horizontal version.

$$rR\Xi \left[A \supset (Do\ (Actn))_{1\ldots n} \right] \supset C$$

where: rR = regulative rule

A = antecedent conditions construed as existing prior to the actor's behavior. Antecedent conditions may include the speech acts and episodes, as well as time, place, role relationships, etc.

$\supset$ = "if . . . then"

Do = deontic operator. The operators of deontic logic include "obligatory," "legitimate," "irrelevant" and "prohibited."

Actn = Action. Class term for both specific acts (SpAct) and representations of sequentially reciprocated speech acts called episodes (Ep).

C = Consequent conditions. These are anticipated outcomes which the person expects to follow his act given the specified antecedent conditions. Consequent conditions may include speech acts and episodes as well as other forms of content and relational outcomes.

Applied to the greeting routine of midwestern Americans, the rule would look like this (Cronen and Pearce, 1978, p. 18):

[presence of other person; availability for conversation; reciprocated orientation	$\supset$	(obligatory (permitted	(introduce self)) (give brief demographic information))	$\supset$ elicit some demographic information; keep conversation going]
		(permitted	(ask for demographic information))	
		(prohibited	(insult))	
		(prohibited	(change topic))	

In either case, the technique has the virtue of providing a viable alternative to behavioristic, mechanistic models of humanity: (1) it displays a temporal sequence of actions; (2) it explains them in terms of the actor's reasons, goals or desired outcomes; and (3) it permits variety in the strength of linkage between antecedents and consequences (Cronen and Pearce, 1978).

But there is a problem for enigmatic episodes in this very emphasis on goal-directedness and on the linkage between antecedents and consequents. This is seen most clearly in Pearce's (1976, pp.24-25) association of communication, coordination and consensual rules. "The study of communication properly centers on the coordination procedures by which individuals intermesh their own actions with those of someone else . . . the essential condition of

coordination is consensual rules. Given a set of rules common to both communicators, each can accurately predict what the reaction to his behaviors will be and can reliably interpret the significance of what the other does."

By contrast, in enigmatic episodes, there are not consensual rules, interlocutors do not share standardized usages, and consequently, prediction of the other's reactions and interpretation of his or her behavior are made difficult if not impossible. A more recent version of "coordination" has the same problem (Cronen and Pearce, 1978, p.3): "Coordination denotes symmetrical interpretation of the on-going sequence of messages and conjoint production of behaviors perceived as patterned." The most recent definition of enigmatic episode by rules theorists (Cronen, Pearce, and Snavely, 1979, Figure 2) confirms the problem: the logical inconsistency of coordination, on the one hand, and enigmatic episodes, on the other. The one excludes the other.

The point I have been arguing is that rules theory cannot adequately explain one important and widespread type of episode, the enigmatic episode. At both the conceptual level, the notion of "coordination," and at a methodological level, the use of the practical syllogism, a kind of intentionality to required of episodes that is simply not possible in the enigmatic episode. Adler (1978a;1978b) has documented the central importance of intentionality to rules theory in general.

However, there is ample evidence of human behavior that is not the result of task coordination, intentionality, and goal-directedness. The intuitive knowledge of grammatical rules is probably the most obvious. But there are others (Cronen and Pearce, 1978). Walton (1969) has noted the unconscious cyclical nature of conflict in organizations. Minuchin, et. al. (1967) have demonstrated the unconscious behavioral patterns of many urban slum dwellers in the U.S. Carson (1969) has cited the unconscious pattern of behavior in alcoholics. To make intentionality the centerpiece

of a communication theory severely limits its applicability.

Let us return to the argumentative structure of the essay. The basic criticism of rules theory is that it cannot adequately treat enigmatic episodes because of its necessary dependence on a kind of goal-directedness that is not characteristic of enigmatic episode. I have also argued that enigmatic eposides form a frequently encountered and important class of episodes in social life, and for that reason, it is all the more important that communication theory adequately account for it.

STRUCTURALISM AND HERMENEUTICS

The third argument posed in this paper is that structural analysis provides a more adequate explanation of enigmatic episodes than does rules theory. In this section I will first present the basic tenets of structuralism in hermeneutical perspective; second, I will show how structural analysis is a solution to the problem of intentionality in rules theory; third I will describe a technique of structural analysis and present a case study to illustrate the technique; and fourth I will propose revisions to rules theory and to structural analysis.

Hermeneutics exemplifies the general characteristics of soft social science: empirical but not quantitative and statistical, nonlaboratory, non-experimental, relying on informed observation and interpretation, and less interested in prediction and control than in understanding and explanation. The whole summer, 1977 issue of Communication Quarterly is an example as are such studies as those by Philpsen (1975) and Nofsinger (1975) and the now-institutionalized rules perspective (Cushman and Whiting, 1972; Pearce, 1973; Pearce, 1976; Cushman, 1977; Cronen and Pearce, 1978; Cronen, Pearce and Snavely, 1979).

A key characteristic of this manner of doing social science is its reliance on interpretation. Hence the label hermeneutical (Palmer, 1969).

"In a limited sense hermeneutics is concerned with the foundation, principles, and methods of interpretation particularly of texts and cultural products" (Deetz, 1974, p.1). Drawing on the writings of Husserl and Heidegger, Deetz, on the one hand, argues for a broad notion of hermeneutics, or interpretation: "Interpretations, then,are the real Worlds in which persons live. . . Interpretation is not added to the world; it is the World" (p.11). Hawes (1977, p.31), on the other hand, offers a more sharply focused view: "hermeneutics can be viewed as the interpretation and understanding of that which manifests itself in and through language-use."

A problem arises, however, in implementing the hermeneutical approach. The variety of alternatives is indicative of the problem. Doubtless many in communication are familiar with cognitive sociology (Cicourel, 1974); ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1976); phenomenological sociology (Psathas, 1973); existential sociology (Douglas, 1977); and there are others. Deetz (1974) and Ricoeur (1974) have argued that structural analysis, as developed by Claude Levi-Strauss, may be used as a hermeneutical technique. I quite agree,and that is the analytical method I will use in the case study below.

But structuralism has so far stirred only peripheral interest in the field of communication. Deetz (1973) has composed a useful introduction to the assumptions underlying its theory and method. Delia and Grossberg (1977) mentioned structuralism as one of several "critical-interpretive" approaches to social theory that have the advantage of preserving "to the greatest extent possible the pretheoretical meaning-structures of the original events" (p.39). So far as I know, only three studies in speech communication make explicit use of structuralist theory and method (Conville, 1978; Hopkins, 1977; and McGuire, 1977). Extended applications of structural analysis to broader aspects of communication include those by Leymore (1975) and Metz (1974).

Structualism (in Levi-Strauss's version) presupposes an underlying order to society. By "underlying" Levi-Strauss (1963, p.121) means that order may not be immediately apparent to an observer or a participant. Social structures are "entities independent of men's consciousness of them (although they in fact govern men's existence)." Or again: "If the structure can be seen, it will not be at the . . . empirical level, but at a deeper one, previously neglected."

By "order," Levi-Strauss (1963, pp.279-280) means: "First, the structure exhibits the characteristics of a system. It is made up of several elements, none of which can undergo a change without effecting changes in all other elements. Second, for any given model, there should be the possibility of ordering a series of transformations resulting in a group of models of the same type. Third, the above properties make it possible to predict how the model will react if one or more of the elements are submitted to certain modifications. Finally, the model should be constituted so as to make immediately intelligible all the observed facts."

The explication of this "underlying order" in a structural study should permit prediction of the behavior of the persons or groups in the observed society and provide an explanation of the observed behavior. The resulting explication should, further, meet the criteria of "economy of explanation; unity of solution; and ability to reconstruct the whole from a fragment, as well as later stages from previous ones" (Levi-Strauss, 1963, p.211).

There are varieties of structuralism, but those who follow Claude Levi-Strauss (1963) subscribe to this most fundamental tenet: human behavior is language-like. This dictum is taken in several senses. First, following Saussure (1974), structuralists hold that language has an overt,

explicit, and observable dimension (parole, speech), and a covert, implicit, and invisible dimension (langue, language rules). So it is with human behavior, they contend. There is an observable dimension, and there is an invisible dimension. Structuralists believe that, in order to understand human behavior, they must discover and explicate the contents of this unseen dimension.

Second, following Jakobson and Halle (1956), structuralists also hold that language is basically binary. That is, just as in distinctive feature theory where phonemes are differentiated by sets of polar opposite acoustic characteristics (such as grave-acute and compact-diffuse), so human behavior may be understood in terms of sets of polar opposite characteristics.

Third, structuralists view language as having two orthogonal dimensions, a syntagmatic one and a paradigmatic one. The syntagmatic dimension comprises the constraints on linear placement of elements within a string, those elements being phonetic, phonemic or morphemic. The paradigmatic dimension describes the classes of elements permitted to occur at each "place" within a string. Thus, syntactically, in English, articles preceed nouns; and paradigmatically, articles and adjectives are classes of morphemic elements that may occur in that position. Human action may be viewed in the same manner. Certain types of actions are permitted or proscribed before or after others (syntagmatic dimension), although many times actors have a whole class of actions from which to choose specific actions (paradigmatic dimension).

Those interested in detailed elaborations of these fundamental beliefs of structuralism will want to consult such interpretations as Leach (1974; 1976), Badcock (1975), Pettit (1975), such anthologies as Ehrmann (1966), Macksey and Donato (1972), and DeGeorge and DeGeorge (1972), and Levi-Strauss's own Structural Anthropology (1963) and his four volume Mythologiques.

At this point an example is in order. Below is Claude Levi-Strauss's study of the Oedipus myth (Conville, 1978). In this example, Levi-Strauss has partitioned the Oedipus story into its major episodes. Then he has

Figure 1

placed similar episodes, or episodes that share a common feature, into the same column. The rows-and-columns arrangement, if read top to bottom and left to right, preserves the sequence of episodes while presenting a typology of episodes in the columns.

By analogy each column is like a phoneme and each episode in the column is like an allophone. Levi-Strauss (1963, p. 214) explains the general significance of the columns:

> Were we to tell the myth, we would disregard the columns and read the rows from left to right and from top to bottom. But if we want to understand the myth, then we will have to disregard one half of the diachronic dimension (top to bottom) and read from left to right, column after column, each one being considered as a unit.

Ricoeur (1974) refers to the telling of the myth as explicating its surface semantics whereas the understanding of the myth (i.e., understanding the "meanings" of the columns) yields a depth semantics. The latter is the goal of structural analysis, according to Roland Barthes (DeGeorge, 1972, p.149) "to reconstruct an 'object' in such a way as to manifest thereby the rules of functioning . . . of this object." What one has as a result of structural analysis "is therefore actually a simulacrum of the object, but a directed, interested simulacrum, since the imitated object makes something appear which remained invisible, or, if one prefers, unintelligible in the

natural object" (DeGeorge, 1972, p. 149).

Although the foregoing example is indicative of the theory and method of structuralism, Levi-Strauss's approach to human action cannot be lifted from social anthropology and planted in communication studies without some important pruning and grafting. Therefore, let us look briefly at how the structuralist approach I am developing in this essay differs from that of Levi-Strauss's.

First the approaches differ as to "level" of explanation or prediction. Levi-Strauss's position is stated by Edmund Leach (1976, pp. 15-16).

> It is our common experience that all kinds of human action, and not just speaking, serve to convey information. Such modes of communication include writing, musical performance, dancing, painting, singing, building, acting, curing, worshipping and so on. The whole argument of this essay rests on the proposition that, at some level, the 'mechanism' of these various modes of communication must be the same, that each is a 'transformation' of every other in much the same sense as a written text is a transformation of speech.

By contrast, what I have developed in this investigation I choose to call intermediate structures. That is, I do not intend that the structures created to explain phenomena observed in this project be taken as universal, or even to cover a whole culture, although they may. I am simply not willing to make that claim, and in fact, Leach's affirmation of scientific faith (the 'same mechanism' proposition, above) is not necessary to my perspective. Rather, I am more comfortable with the view that admits of competing explanatory structures at the same "level." Which one I choose depends on the kind of "information" it produces, my "information" needs, and my view of reality in general and of humanity in particular.

The second point at which my approach differs from Levi-Strauss's concerns communication theory. His communication theory is information

theory.

At one point Levi-Strauss (1963, p.298) speaks of the "consolidation of anthropology, economics, and linguistics into one great field, that of communication." This seems to mean two things to him. First, "that they consist exclusively of the study of rules and have little concern with the nature of the partners (either individuals or groups) whose play is being patterned after those rules" (Levi-Strauss, 1963, p.298). Second, information theory provides units of measurement (information, entropy, bit, etc.) that are uncontaminated by "the nature of the partners" and which can therefore be used for cross-cultural comparisons. Leach too is in the same paradigm when he speaks (above) of human action as "conveying" information.

By contrast, my perspective is transactional rather than linear, and as a consequence, it is especially concerned with "the nature of the partners" engaged in interaction. Specifically, I take the position that information cannot be conveyed. Rather, people around me act, I interpret their behavior and thereby create messages (Swanson & Delia, 1976; Stewart, 1975; Wilmot, 1975). Each person's cognitive equipment and perceptual strategies for creating messages are unique, a function of his or her autobiography. So in answer to the question of what information is "coveyed" in, by, or through a performance at the Grand Ole Opry, for example, I would have to answer: that depends on who is performing what before whom in what immediate and long-range historical context. A transactional perspective on communication holds that a communication event is a joint creation of the participants. When I talk and you listen, I am not putting "information" into your head. I am simply supplying you with linguistic and other phenomena from which you construct messages Simultaneously, I am constructing messages from your listening behavior. Whatever is the "meaning" of our interchange, it depends both on the

observed behaviors and our interpretations of them.

STRUCTURALISM AS SOLUTION

I maintain that structural analysis is a solution to the problem of intentionality in rules theory from two perspectives. First is the argument that structural analysis is legitimate for human action although it was originally developed for the analysis of texts. Paul Ricoeur (1974) has deftly presented this argument. Ricoeur's basic argument is that if human action is enough like literary texts (and he argues congently that it is), then the same interpretive procedures can be used to understand human action as are used to understand literary texts. He begins his argument by asserting that discourses are marked by 4 traits. First, they occur in time and therefore enunciate a temporally idosyncratic complex of meanings. Second, they have a speaker/writer and in various ways refer back to him or her. Third, discourses are always about something, and fourth, they are addressed to some kind of audience.

The next point in Ricoeur's argument is a basic distinction between spoken and written discourse. Spoken discourse is ephemeral and fleeting, but to write discourse is to fix it in time, to hold it for further examination. The 4 traits of discourse therefore mainfest themselves quite differently in spoken and written discourse. Relative to spoken discourse, written discourse is (1) freed from the ostensive reference of the moment; (2) the author's intended meanings are much less important in written discourse; (3) in written discourse the something that the text is about is potentially much larger than the shared situation of communicants in spoken discourse; and (4) in written discourse the addressees are all who can read. Written discourse, in short, permits a disintegration of the elements in those 4 traits of discourse, whereas in spoken discourse they co-occur in time and space.

This kind of disintegration is what Ricoeur (1974,p.538) means by the objectification that is necessary for human action to be an object of science.

> My claim is that action itself, action as meaningful, may become an object of science, without losing its character of meaningfulness, through a kind of objectification similar to the fixation which occurs in writing. By this objectification, action is no longer a transaction to which the discourse of action would still belong. It constitutes a delineated pattern which has to be interpreted according to its inner connections.

That "delineated pattern" of action is what is made manifest through structural analysis.

The final point in Ricoeur's argument is that human action shares with written discourse or texts the disintegration of the elements in those 4 defining traits. Let us see how each trait applies to human behavior. In each case, the guiding assumption is that <u>doing is a kind of utterance</u>.

First, discourse is said to be fixed in time. Likewise, (1) I am perceived as making statements by my actions; (2) I enact the constitutive rules of my culture; and (3) my actions have lasting effects, as for example, a parent influencing his or her children. In each case it is possible to consider the <u>meaning</u> of the action as detached from the <u>event</u> of the action. Second, discourse refers back to a speaker, no matter how "distended and complicated" that relationship between the doer and the action. Action has a social dimension. Indeed, we often cannot foresee or control the unintended effects of our actions. And those effects often become the property of society if they are institutionalized as reputation or as policy. Third, discourse is always about something.

And that something is that "world" the discourse calls forth from the reader. In like manner, "the meaning of an important event exceeds, transcends, the social conditions of its production" (Ricoeur, 1974, p.543). Fourth, discourse always has an addressee who interprets it. As with texts, my actions are "read" or interpreted by observers. "That means that, like a text, human action is an open work, the meaning of which is 'in suspense'" (Ricoeur, 1974, pp. 559-560).

Therefore, it follows, Ricoeur argues, that since doing is a kind of utterance, the same interpretive procedures that are used to understand texts may also be used to understand human behavior. He has in mind structural analysis.

The second perspective from which one may justify the selection of structural analysis as a solution to the intentionality problem in rules theory focuses on intentionality per se. In Levi-Strauss's version of structuralism, the individual actor is specifically designated as not conscious of the structures, patterns, or rules that are responsible for his or her action. Levi-Strauss has said that social structures are "entities independent of men's consciousness of them (although they in fact govern men's existence)." A commentator on Levi-Strauss, Dyson-Hudson (1972, p. 233) has put it this way: "for Levi-Strauss, the phenomena that he is trying to handle have, overwhelmingly, a subjective existence, and it is in their objectification that his real problem lies."

So the answer to the problem of intentionality in enigmatic episodes may be a very simple one: pick an analytical procedure that does not require the actors to be consciously goal-directed.

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS AS TECHNIQUE

Here are the basic elements of the technique: (1) Recount a significant learning experience from your past; (2) make a chronology

of the most important episodes or events in the experience; (3) make a column parallel to this list and name the emotions or feelings your experienced with each event listed; (4) arrange the chronology into a rows-and-columns grid in Levi-Strauss fashion; and (5) interpret the grid with reference to the question, "How (not what) did I learn in this experience?"

Here is the case. Coming to college or university precipitates many personal changes in students. A not infrequent one is the termination of an amorous relationship that started in high school. Such was the experience of Diane F. When she came to the university she had been dating John B. exclusively for her last two and one half years in high school. As she recounted this significant learning experience, Diane pointed out three problems with their relationship--John was nearly four years her senior, they had not been together all that much since he had been away at school (the last two years), and, what turned out to be the biggest problem of all, John was serious about marriage and Diane did not realize how serious.

They had discussed marriage before, but it was always focused on the distant future when they were both out of school. It was like an exciting fantasy to Diane at this point. Then, in December of her freshman year, John's best friend, also a junior, got married. John immediately began reassessing his finances and decided that he and Diane could be married the following September. This frightened Diane. She simply did not want to be married so soon. But for fear of losing John she did not tell him how she felt.

Two months passed with John making arrangements for the wedding and for setting up housekeeping and with Diane frustrated and losing sleep and remaining silent in the face of her impending doom. Another month passed, and she was finally able to break her silence on the subject. She told him she would not marry him the next September, but he would not accept

it. The next two months saw John alternating between threatening suicide and begging Diane to change her mind. Needless to say, that brought on more frustration, lost sleep, and even lost weight.

In what turned out to be their last conversation, Diane was able to tell John how she had felt all along about marriage, that she had been too immature to consider marriage seriously so soon, and that she wished he would forgive her and be her friend. In Diane's own words, "He couldn't, and I haven't seen him since."

Recounting a significant learning experience is the first step in structural analysis of human action. Step 2 is to make a chronology of the important episodes in the experience, and Step 3 is to make a parallel list of emotions that accompanied those events. Figure 2 presents these as Diane produced them.

Figure 2

There is a minor problem that some entries in the list of emotions do not seem to name emotions. However, this was remedied when she arranged the sequence of emotions into a rows-and-columns grid. That is the fourth step in the procedure. Figure 3 reproduces Diane's grid. Recall from

Figure 3

the explanation of Levi-Strauss's analysis of the Oedipus myth in Figure 1 that each column represents a class of events or shares a common feature. Diane F. provided the column labels herself.

The final step in implementing the discovery procedure is to interpret the grid. Diane made the following interpretations. Recall that

these interpretations are answers to the question (from the student's point of view), "How did I learn in this experience?" First, "I had to 'bounce' back and forth between being totally withdrawn from the situation and my dissatisfaction with the condition of my life." Second, she had to understand her share of the responsibliity for her problem. Third, she had to become intensely dissatisfied before she decided to take initiatives to deal with her situation. Fourth, the learning process was "long and difficult." Fifth, it was helpful to have the observations of a friend relatively outside the problem. Sixth, once she found a way to deal with the situation, she stuck with it.

IMPLICATIONS

Finally, let us move to consider four implications of the above critique of rules theory. The first two involve revisions in current rules theory. Both revisions focus on the rows-and-columns grid generated by structural analysis. Most important is the issue of the appropriate unit of analysis. Current rules theory takes the episode as the standard unit of analysis. Structural analysis takes the grid as the unit of analysis. To do so allows the researcher to take a contextual perspective on communication. And it is a particular kind of context that structural analysis produces. That context has both a syntactic dimension and a paradigmatic dimension. The syntactic dimension is the time sequence of episodes: what episodes preceeded and followed what other episodes. The paradigmatic dimension is the classification of episode types.

To focus on the grid as the unit of analysis provides two interpretive standpoints. Current roles theory provides for only one, the paradigmatic. It is an essentially static view of communication. Cronen and Davis (1978) have made this same criticism of rules theorists' assuming a closed system perspective and overlooking an open systems perspective. The latter is

the perspective expressed in this essay. To add the diachronic perspective permits the researcher to make interpretations regarding communication as process, to focus on the evolution of the relationships under study.

A somewhat less important revision to rules theory involves Cronen and Pearce's Hierarchy Model of Meanings (Cronen, Pearce, & Harris, 1979, p.25). In their original model one skips in the hierarchy from episodes to life-scripts. I want to propose an intermediate structure

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Figure 4

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between these two elements. Let us call it episode cluster. Based on the case analysis above, it would seem that there are experiences which are composed of episode-sets but which do not carry the weighty implications of a life-script (Figure 4).

The interposition of "episode cluster," operationalized as a grid, in the hierarchy between "episodes" and "life-scripts" would permit more specific and focused and therefore more useful interpretations of episodes in a person's life experience. Only after finding many significant experiences with similar grid-arrays would it become useful or reasonable to talk of life-scripts. The use of the intermediate structure, "episode cluster" functions as a guard against premature generalizations about a person's communication style as set in a life-script.

The next set of revisions concerns structuralism as an analytical technique. The most important is Dyson-Hudson's criticism (Macksey and Donato, 1970). He argues that structural analysis, in Levi-Strauss's version, is far too impersonal. That is, analysts all too quickly skip from the consideration of real human beings to bloodless abstractions. According to Dyson-Hudson, what is missing from Levi-Strauss's rationalism

is the notion of praxis, the ordinary, everyday activity by which people constitute themselves and their place in the world. In practical terms, he argues, this means including in structural study the concepts of the individual, and his or her interests, and roles.

By individual he means a person, not merely as a "bag of molecules, but as a sentient being with definable interests." By interests he means a person's settled, avowed, and attainable aspirations. And by roles he means the array of choices persons have for realizing themselves. To add the notion of praxis to the practice of structural anthropology will bring its results in line with the uniqueness of persons that is our common experience, for, according to Dyson-Hudson, "the demand of our science is, however difficult it may be, to try to bring our analytical concepts to the point at which our experience is made sense of: not to lop off stretches of our experience in conformity with our limited analytical perceptions" (Macksey and Donato, p. 238).

A solution to this problem noted by Dyson-Hudson is illustrated in this essay. It is to make individual case studies the focus of structural analysis instead of whole cultures or subcultures. In this manner, the notion of praxis is retained in communication study. Structural analysis, as practiced in this essay, puts communication scholars in a good position to answer the question Dyson-Hudson posed for social anthropologists: "How can we understand humans as having both an internal, personal, subjective dimension and an external, impersonal, objective dimension?"

A less important revision in structural analysis involves a criticism by Leach (1974). The problem is Levi-Strauss's insistence on viewing social phenomena in terms of binary opposites, on the model of Jakobson and Halle's distinctive feature theory. Says Leach, "A fully satisfactory mechanical model of the human mind would certainly contain many analogue features which do not occur in digital computers" (Leach, 1974, p.98).

A solution to Leach's criticism is to instruct the persons who are the case studies to analyze their own experiences. That is what Diane did in Figure 3 and an interesting thing happened. She produced a 5 column grid, whereas the typical academic structuralist would have produced a grid with an even number of columns, to achieve column-pairs that are polar opposites. Levi-Strauss's analysis of the Oedipus myth is an example. Diane's grid is confirming evidence that Levi-Strauss's insistence on polarity is exaggerated. My experience with Diane's case, and many others, indicates that the technique can be easily taught and that subjects' own analyses are insightful and useful even when they do not seek polarity.

SUMMARY

In this essay I have posed three arguments: (1) that there is a class of episodes that rules theory cannot adequately explain, enigmatic episodes; (2) that enigmatic episodes are both frequently encountered and important in human experience; and (3) that structural analysis provides for a more adequate explanation of enigmatic episodes.

Along the way I have developed a conceptual and methodological critique of rules theory. At a conceptual level, I have demonstrated how the concept of coordination is irrelevant in speaking of enigmatic episodes. At a methodological level, I have shown how enigmatic episodes by definition do not entail the intentionality inherent in the practical syllogism.

Moreover, I have proposed an alternative approach to the understanding of enigmatic episodes, structural analysis. Through a summary of its presuppositions, a justification of its application to human action, and

a case analysis, I proposed a version of structural analysis for communication study.

Finally, I developed two revisions in rules theory that followed from the foregoing critique and case analysis and two revisions in structural analysis as well.

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Overrating of Blood Relations	Underrating of Blood Relations	Denial of the Autochthonous Origin of Man	Autochthonous Origin of Man
1. Cadmos seeks his sister Europa, ravished by Zeus		2. Cadmos kills the dragon	
	3. The Spartoi kill one another		4. Labdoacos (Laois' father) = lame (?)
	5. Oedipus kills his father, Laios		6. Laios (Oedipus' father) = left-sided (?)
		7. Oedipus kills the Sphinx	8. Oedipus = swollen foot (?)
9. Oedipus marries his mother, Jocasta	10. Eteocles kills his brother, Polynices		
11. Antigone buries her brother, Polynices, despite prohibition			

Figure 1.

Levi-Strauss's structural analysis of the Oedipus myth
(adapted from Levi-Strauss, 1963, pp. 214-215)

Episodes		Emotions
1.	entered college	happy
2.	John got serious	unconsciously denying
3.	John's friend's marriage	forced admission
4.	John plans wedding	passive and confused
5.	I realized I didn't want to get married	unhappy
6.	John sent me roses	deeply confused
7.	I got physically ill	realized that I had to become more active
8.	I told John that I didn't want to get married	unhappy
9.	John threatened suicide	reverted to passiveness
10.	John arguing and begging	deeply depressed
11.	My friend's question, "How could you have prevented this?"	responsible and guilty
12.	my reaction	changed attitude about my passive attitude toward life
13.	I told John the whole truth	felt more mature
14.	John left for good	felt better about my new honest self

Figure 2.

Diane F's Chronology of Episodes and Emotions During Her Deteriorating Relationship

Childish	Disrupted	Withdrawn	Dissatisfied	More Mature
1. HAPPY entered college				
2. UNCONSCIOUS DENIAL John got serious	3. FORCED ADMISSION John's friend's marriage	4. PASSIVE AND CONFUSED John plans wedding	5. UNHAPPY realized I didn't want to get married	
		6. DEEPLY CONFUSED John sent me roses		
	7. REALIZED I HAD TO BECOME MORE ACTIVE I got physically sick		8. UNHAPPY told John I didn't want to get married	
		9. REVERTED TO PASSIVENESS John threatened suicide	10. DEPRESSED John arguing and begging	
			11. GUILT friend's question, How could you have prevented this?	11. RESPONSIBLE friend's question, How could you have prevented this?
				12. CHANGED ATTITUDE my reaction to friend's question
				13. FELT MORE MATURE told John the whole truth
				14. FELT BETTER ABOUT MYSELF John left for good

Figure 3

Diane F's Structural Analysis of her Deteriorating Relationship

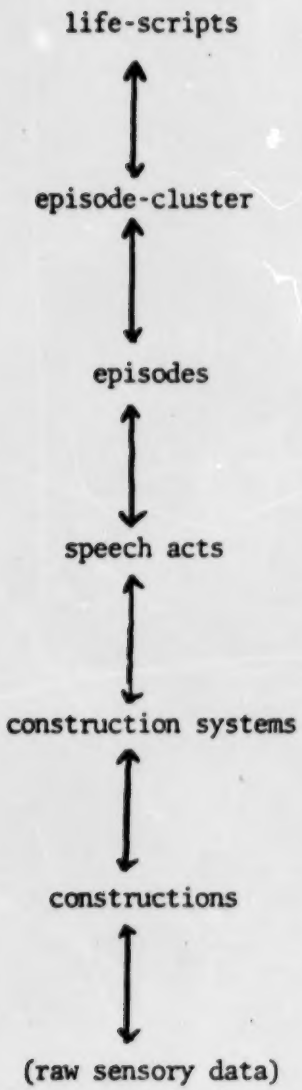

Figure 4.

Revised Hierarchy of Meaning